

Reflections on September 2010 Internship Field-based Activities

As a practicing Director of Technology in La Vernia ISD, my Internship activities are naturally somewhat different from those of the typical student. After discussing the best course of action with Dr. Abernathy, we agreed that under the guidance of my Mentor, LVISD Superintendent Dr. Tom Harvey, I would pick tasks that I perform as a part of my duties, but examine them with a critical eye towards which ISTE Technology Facilitator (TF) Standards and Performance Indicator they address. Additionally, two separate, special technology tasks are designated as Internship Projects.

Leadership was key in my Internship activities this month, so Standard VIII played a role in almost all of my activities. Williamson and Redish (2009) denote the importance of this Standard to educational technology leaders; "...Standard VIII describes how technologists lead others in creating a research-based vision and developing a long-range strategic plan moving the vision into reality" (p. 177).

My first activities for September dealt with my development and delivery of mini-inservice sessions presented to the Leadership Team during regularly scheduled meetings, called "Tech Bytes for Leaders". When planning the first subjects of my Tech Bytes for Leaders sessions, I discussed potential topics with my Superintendent, who is also my Internship Mentor. We decided to target Web 2.0 tools, including Web-based email and Google Calendar, during the first sessions. Solomon and Schrum (2007) state that "With a Web 2.0 calendar, the user and anyone who needs to know his or her schedule can check it online."; they further elaborate that "With Google Calendar, you can see other's schedules next to your own and cross-reference and add new events quickly. You can also set up automatic event reminders and search the calendar to find events" (p. 66). Like my two Internship projects, Tech Bytes for Leaders helped me meet

ISTE Performance Indicator TF-VIII.E as I engaged in supervised field-based experiences with accomplished technology leaders.

Again this month, I attended District Facilitator Training at the Region 20 Education Service Center on Project Share, the centralized, State-level e-portfolio system designed for teacher and student use by the Texas Education Agency (TEA). Buzzetto-More (2010) expounds on the benefits of such a system "...when e-portfolios are housed in a centralized system, they form a dynamic database that can be queried and cross-referenced" (p. 2). This activity helped me meet multiple Performance Indicators under ISTE Standard TF-II, but especially Performance Indicator TF-II.A, calling for me to design and implement developmentally appropriate learning opportunities that apply technology-enhanced instructional strategies in support of the diverse needs of learners.

I continued my planning and design work in preparation for the coming implementation of my primary Internship project, the Special Ed Virtualization and Virtual Desktop Project. I also practiced educational leadership as I met with principals and librarians regarding campus technology purchasing and classroom technology integration guidelines. These activities also helped me meet all the Performance Indicators under ISTE Standard TF-II, but especially Performance Indicator TF-II.F as I identified and applied instructional design principles associated with the development of technology resources.

An unplanned learning opportunity occurred as La Vernia ISD fell victim to a virus outbreak; I had to act fast to identify the source and type of infection and then update systems to mitigate the effects and halt the spread of infection while attempting to minimize disruption to instruction. This task helped me substantiate mastery of Performance Indicator TF-I.B as I

demonstrated continual growth in my technology knowledge and skills to stay abreast of the current and emerging technologies related to network security and intrusion prevention.

While reflecting on the month's activities, I gained a deeper understanding of the ways in which District leaders can use Web 2.0 tools to increase their productivity. This connects to my past learning as throughout my degree program my colleagues and I used Web 2.0 tools to increase our productivity and improve our performance and collaboration on tasks. My future learning has been impacted by a drive to discover and model new ways in which various Web 2.0 tools can help my teachers and administrators improve their practice.

Viewing my performance on the virus outbreak task from an educator's point of view, I learned that I responded to the unexpected situation well, thinking on my feet, and making every effort to minimize the impact of the virus outbreak on instruction and operation. My new learning on the importance of instructional technology to our digital native students led me to take extra care to lessen instructional impact, and I actually had most instructional systems back on line before all the business systems were cleaned. My performance during these tasks was positively impacted by the assistance and support offered by my Superintendent and the entire Leadership Team, who once again proved their unquestioning support by seeking to assist me in any way possible. Based on these activities, I will take a newfound respect for the ability of our campus and District leaders to pull together in a crisis to help solve any problem to future contexts.

As a learner, I gained new self-assurance while presenting my Tech Bytes for Leaders mini-inservice sessions to my leadership team; I was able to confidently converse with them regarding potential instructional benefits thanks to my learning throughout my degree program. I was effective as a learner as I transferred the skills I had acquired using Web 2.0 tools in my

Lamar classes to a training scenario. I will transfer my learning to new situations as these mini-inservice opportunities continue and other inservice opportunities arise.

As a lifelong learner, I must perform further research regarding new methods to prevent virus infection from the *inside*; most of our network security is aimed at keeping threats from entering our District via the Internet, but I need to learn how to better protect our systems from viruses walking in on USB memory sticks without excessively locking down or restricting access to our teacher and student workstations.

References:

- Williamson, J. & Redish, T. (2009). *Technology Facilitation and Leadership Standards: What Every K-12 Leader Should Know and Be Able To Do*. Eugene, OR: International Society for Technology in Education.
- Solomon, G. & Schrum, L. (2007). *Web 2.0: New Tools, New Schools*. Eugene, OR: International Society for Technology in Education.
- Buzzetto-More, N. (2010). *The E-Portfolio Paradigm: Informing, Educating, Assessing, and Managing With E-Portfolios*. Santa Rosa, CA: Informing Science Press.